

Baseball at the time.
in 1920, ruth joined



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Baseball player. Born George Herman Ruth, Jr.

, on February 6, 1895, in Baltimore, Maryland. He was the first of eight children born to Kate and George Herman Ruth, Sr. Most of the Ruth children died in infancy and only George Jr. and his sister Mamie survived to maturity. Little George, as he was called, grew up in a poor waterfront neighborhood in Baltimore, where he lived above the family saloon. In 1902, the Ruths sent their son away to St. Marys Industrial School for Boys, which was both a reformatory and an orphanage. Ruth developed a love for sports, particularly baseball, which served as his escape from the strict environment at St Marys.

From an early age he showed potential as an athlete, and in his late teens he had developed into a professional candidate. His tough southpaw pitching attracted Jack Dunn, manager of the minor league Baltimore Orioles. In 1914, the Orioles signed Ruth to his first professional baseball contract. He became the teams youngest member, and was befittingly nicknamed Babe. Within five months, 19-year-old Ruth graduated to the major leagues, and signed with the Boston Red Sox. He remained with the team for six seasons, alternating positions as pitcher and outfielder. With his great pitching, powerful bat, and winning personality, he was quickly on his way to greatness, overshadowing players like Ty Cobb and Honus Wagner. After a controversy revealed that the Chicago White Sox conspired to throw the 1919 World Series, the sport of baseball was in need of a hero.

The scandal had shaken the publics faith in the game. However, in 1919, while still a part-time pitcher for the Red Sox, Ruth made his home-run

assault on the record books. His 25th home run that year shattered the modern major league record held by the now forgotten Gabby Kraveth. By the end of the year, Ruth's record was an unprecedented 29 home runs, and he was credited with reviving faith in the game. In December of 1919, the Boston Red Sox sold the invaluable player to New York Yankee owner Colonel Jacob Ruppert.

Ruppert bought Ruth's contract for over \$100,000, which was a staggering price at the time. In 1920, Ruth joined the Yankees, who as yet had never won a pennant. For years they played in the shadow of the New York Giants. Without a baseball park to call their own, the Yankees were forced to hold their games at the Giants Polo Grounds. Ruth started as a full-time outfielder, hitting 54 home runs his first year with the Yankees. Shortly after, he became baseball's preeminent player, and such a drawing card that New York built a new stadium for the crowds he was attracting. Yankee Stadium had its opening day on April 4, 1923, with a total attendance of 74,000.

The stadium became known as The House That Ruth Built, and the period became known as the Golden Age of Baseball. On opening day, Ruth made the first home run in Yankee Stadium history. Ruth's slugging percentages in 1920 and 1921 were .847 and .846. Neither figure has ever been approached.

In fact, a slugging percentage higher than .704 has been achieved only 20 times, eight by Ruth. In 1923, hitting .393, he was named the league's Most Valuable Player, and capped off the year by ushering the Yankees to their first World Series Championship.

He also led the American League in home runs from 1919-1924, and again from 1926-1931. In 1927, Ruth hit 60 home runs, breaking his own record, and setting a new one that would endure for decades (Roger Maris broke it in 1961). With an exceptional year, he assumed almost mythic status, and was nicknamed The Sultan of Swat, The Home Run King, and Herman the Great. Off the field Ruth reveled in his celebrity status, enjoying a wild and extravagant life. However, his high living and headstrong behavior eventually began to take a toll on his performance.

He was still baseballs premier player but fellow teammate and newcomer Lou Gehrig started to show signs of greatness as well. The year 1931 was the start of Ruths 12th season with the Yankees, and it also marked the great days